

DIOCESE OF CANTERBURY
Changed lives - Changing
lives



ST. LAURENCE CHURCH
THE PARISH EUCHARIST

SERVICE CELEBRATED IN CELTIC

STYLE

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT,

YEAR A

21.12.2025

The Youtube details are:

<https://www.youtube.com/@StLaurenceChurchHawkhurst>

The sides person today is:
Diana Hunt

Hymn (Please stand if you are able)

O come, O come, Immanuel,
and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Refrain

Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

O come, O Wisdom from on high,
who ordered all things mightily;
to us the path of knowledge show
and teach us in its ways to go.

Refrain

O come, O come, great Lord of
might,
who to your tribes on Sinai's
height
in ancient times did give the law
in cloud and majesty and awe.

Refrain

O come, O Branch of Jesse's
stem,
unto your own and rescue them!
From depths of hell your people
save,
and give them victory o'er the
grave. **Refrain**

O come, O Key of David, come
and open wide our heavenly
home.
Make safe for us the heavenward
road
and bar the way to death's
abode. **Refrain**

O come, O Bright and Morning
Star,
and bring us comfort from afar!
Dispel the shadows of the night
and turn our darkness into light.

Refrain

O come, O King of nations, bind
in one the hearts of all mankind.
Bid all our sad divisions cease
and be yourself our King of
Peace. **Refrain**

Welcome/The Gathering

Gather us in, the lost and the
lonely, the broken and breaking,

the tired and aching, who long for the nourishment found at your feast.

Gather us in

The done and the doubting, the wishing and wondering, the puzzled and pondering, who long for your company, found at your feast.

Gather us in

The proud and pretentious the sure and superior the never inferior who long for the levelling found at your feast.

Gather us in

The bright and the bustling, the stirrers, the shakers, the kind laughter makers who long for the deeper joys found at your feast.

Gather us in

From corner or limelight, from mansion or campsite, from fears and obsession, from tears and depression, from untold excesses, from treasured successes; to meet, to eat, to be given a seat; be joined to the vine; be offered new wine; become like the least; be found at the feast.

Gather us in!

Confession

Create a clean heart within me, O God, so that it may become your chosen shelter and the

resting place of the Holy Spirit. I take the cross upon me, over the tablet of my heart, and I beseech the living God of the universe, may the light of lights come to my dark hard heart so that I may live in the power of your love. Amen.

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and keep you in life eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Collect

God our redeemer, who prepared the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the mother of your Son: grant that, as she looked for his coming as our saviour, so we may be ready to greet him when he comes again as our judge; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

First Reading Read By Jane Cooper

Isaiah 7:10-14

The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying:

Ask for a sign from the LORD, your God; let it be deep as the netherworld, or high as the sky!

But Ahaz answered, "I will not ask! I will not tempt the LORD!"
Then Isaiah said: Listen, O house of David! Is it not enough for you to weary people, must you also weary my God? Therefore the Lord himself will give you this sign: the virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel. This is the word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

Hymn

LONG ago, prophets knew
Christ would come, born a Jew.
Come to make all things new;
Bear his People's burden,
Freely love and pardon.

Refrain:

Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!
Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!
When he comes,
When he comes,
Who will make him welcome?

God in time, God in man,
This is God's timeless plan:
He will come, as a man,
Born himself of woman,
God divinely human. [**Refrain**]

Mary, hail! Though afraid,
She believed, she obeyed.
In her womb God is laid;
Till the time expected
Nurtured and protected. [**Refrain**]

Journey ends! Where afar
Bethlem shines, like a star,

Stable door stands ajar.
Unborn Son of Mary,
Saviour, do not tarry!
Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!
sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!
Jesus comes!
Jesus comes!
We will make him welcome!

Gospel

R. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

The virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel.

R. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

The Lord be with you
And also with you

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the Holy Spirit.

Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is

through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her.

She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet:

Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means "God is with us." When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home.

This is the Gospel of the Lord,
Praise to you, O Christ.

Reflection

Affirmation of Faith

There is no other God, there never was and there never will be, than God the Father, unbegotten and without beginning, the Lord of the universe, as we have been taught.

And His son Jesus Christ, whom we declare to have always been with the Father in a way that baffles description. He was made man, defeated death and received into heaven by the Father and given power over all names, in heaven, on earth and under the earth.

We believe in Him and look for His coming soon as a judge of all, treating everyone according to their faith and deeds.

He has poured out His Spirit on us in abundance, the gift and guarantee of eternal life.

We acknowledge and adore Him as one God in the Trinity of the Holy Name. Amen.

The Prayers of the Church led by Rachel Elliott

In the power of the Spirit, and in union with Christ, let us pray to the Father.

Everlasting God we come today on the last Sunday of our Advent journey towards Christmas and we give thanks as we remember those journeys that were being taken on that first Christmas more than 2000 years ago.

Mary and Joseph – travelling by foot to enrol in the Roman census; The Wise Men following the signs in the heavens; The unsuspecting Shepherds moving from pasture to pasture with their flocks; The Jewish Nation, also unsuspecting, moving through history towards a world changing event.

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Gracious God As we think of Mary, pregnant with the Holy child journeying towards motherhood we pray for all women who are expecting a new addition to their families. We also remember that not all pregnancies are wanted and so we pray for all who are carrying unwanted babies and for the decisions they have to make, some of which may be very unpleasant.

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

We pray for Bishop Rose and Sarah, Archbishop elect, that all things belonging to the Holy Spirit may continue to live and grow in them.

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Merciful God, we pray for all who like Mary and Joseph are making long and difficult journeys by foot especially those fleeing from war and terror. For those trying to escape war, hardship, drought, famine or persecution. For those embarking on perilous journeys across the Mediterranean and the English Channel in dreadfully unsuitable craft and for those

who are providing rescue services.

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Creator God we pray for our world, which like that of the Holy Land at the time of Jesus' birth, is facing an incredible change which was to be the basis of the history of the next two millennia and note years. We pray the future of our world as climate change continues to make itself felt in so many unsettling ways.

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Mighty God we pray for the wise men and women of our modern world who are making amazing technological advances and moving our world ever faster into the future. Help us at all times to use that technology for the good of your creation and let it never get in the way of the way that we live our lives for you and for our neighbours in Christ

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Faithful God we pray for the sick and the suffering especially when having to travel to hospital for treatment or surgery and for

those who love them and care for them. We pray for Eleanor Ash, David Winstone, John Tanner, Irene Bow, Brian Elliott, Jill Fitzpatrick, Keith Brown, Thomas Cox, Gwen Brown, Peter Duffy, Matt, Jill, Carol, Dido Robson, Hannah, Chris Bodeen, Val, Jane and Jeremy, Val Mansell.

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Loving God, give us ears to hear and minds to understand the message and gift of Christmas so that we may look forward with patience and confidence to that time when we will join you in the peace of eternity. And we especially pray for any we know who recently died and are on that journey to you. We pray for the recently departed.

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Living God, we pray those whose years' mind occur this month: Michael Roger Fisher-Barham, David Colvin, Alice Mary Bennett, Diana Jones, Leslie Richardson, John Heady, Herbert Fautly, Matthew Liggett, Elizabeth Jones, George Longley, Millicent Butler, Lilian Guest, Sarah Scrivener, Mark

Ryan, Sylvia Doreen Gould, Audrey Fautly, Irene Reed, Nancy Bennett, Mary Alice Hammonds, Charles Newcomb, Fergus Gask, Gerald Larkin, Ignace Van Kan, Barbara Kirby, Victoria Wells, Mary Kilby, John Hunt, Ida Levett, Peter Scoones, Joyce Clark, Barbara Elgar, Neville Highwood, Ronald Catt, Raymond Collins, Dennis Vinall, Derek Christie, David Hyde, Sheila Cox, Anne Maugham, Roy Cooper, Charles Henry Collingwood, Kiora Andrew Hill, Peter Penfold.

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Gracious God, who chose the Mary to be the mother of the promised saviour: fill us with your grace, that like Mary we might rejoice in your salvation; send us out to finish our Advent journey filled with love and joy and peace ready to receive that promise afresh into our lives.

Merciful Father: **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen**

So, in the presence of the Bread of Life who refused food for himself in order to nourish others, we deepen our devotion by praying His words:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen

Hymn (Please stand if you are able)

Ye who own the faith of Jesus,
sing the wonders that were done
when the love of God the Father
over sin the victory won,
when he made the Virgin Mary
mother of his only Son.
Hail Mary, hail Mary, hail Mary,
full of grace.

Blessed were the chosen people
out of whom the Lord did come;
blessed was the land of promise
fashioned for his earthly home;
but more blessed far the mother,
she who bare him in her womb.

Hail Mary, hail Mary, hail Mary,
full of grace.

Wherefore let all faithful people
tell the honour of her name;
let the Church, in her foreshad-
owed,
part in her thanksgiving claim;
what Christ's mother sang in
gladness
let Christ's people sing the same.
Hail Mary, hail Mary, hail Mary,
full of grace.

Let us weave our supplications,
she with us and we with her,
for the advancement of the faith-
ful,
for each faithful worshiper,
for the doubting, for the sinful,
for each heedless wanderer.
Hail Mary, hail Mary, hail Mary,
full of grace.

May the Mother's intercessions
on our homes a blessing win,
that the children all be prospered,
strong and fair and pure within,
following our Lord's own foot-
steps,
firm in faith and free from sin.
Hail Mary, hail Mary, hail Mary,
full of grace.

For the sick and the aged,
for our dear ones far away,

for the hearts that mourn in secret,
all who need our prayers today,
for the faithful gone before us,
may the holy Virgin pray.
Hail Mary, hail Mary, hail Mary,
full of grace.

Praise, O Mary, praise the Father,
praise thy Saviour and thy Son,
praise the everlasting Spirit,
who hath made thee ark and throne
o'er all creatures high exalted,
lowly praise the Three in One.
Hail Mary, hail Mary, hail Mary,
full of grace.

Prayer of Adoration

Heaven is here, and earth and the space between them is thin. Distance may divide, but Christ's promise unites those bounded by time, those blessed by eternity.

Let heaven be glad;

Let the whole earth cry GLORY!

Heaven is here, and earth, and the Church above and below is one. Peter is here, and Paul, Martha and all the Mary's, the saints from far back and those who left us not long ago. And only sight prevents us from seeing them, one with us on the other side.

Let heaven be glad

Let the whole earth cry GLORY!

Heaven is here, and earth, and the God who made them is present. The lamb, glorious on the throne, sits beside us; the Spirit of God, the Dove makes her resting place among us.

God inhales the breath of our prayers and spreads a table for our satisfaction.

Let heaven be glad.

Let the whole earth cry GLORY!

Blessing and honour and glory and power be to our God for ever and ever. **Amen!**

The Invitation

He was always the guest. In the homes of Peter and Jails, Martha and Mary, Joanna and Susanna. At the meal tables of the wealthy where he pleaded the case of the poor, he was always the guest. Upsetting polite company, befriending isolated people; welcoming the stranger, he was always the guest. But here, at this table, He is the host. Those who wish to serve Him must first be served by Him, those who wish to follow Him, must first be fed by Him, those who would wash His feet, must first let Him make them clean.

For this is the table where God intends us to be nourished. This is the time when God can make us new. So come, you who hunger and thirst for a deeper faith, a better life, a fairer world. Jesus Christ who has sat at our tables, now invites us to be guests at His.

The Story

What we do here, we do in imitation of what Christ first did. To his followers in every age, Jesus gave an example and command rooted in the experience he shared with his disciples in an upstairs room in Jerusalem.

On the night when he was betrayed, as they were sitting at a meal, Jesus took a piece of bread and broke it, he gave it to the disciples saying 'This is my body. It is broken for you. Do this to remember me.'

Later after they had eaten, he took a cup of wine and said 'This cup is the new relationship with God made possible because of my death. Drink this all of you, to remember me.'

So now, we do as Jesus did. We take this bread and this wine, the produce of the earth and fruit of human labour. In these Jesus has promised to be present; through these, Christ can make us whole.

**All that I am, all that I do,
all that I'll ever have, I offer
now to you.**

**Take and sanctify these gifts
for your honour, Lord.
Knowing that I love and serve
you
is enough reward.**

**All that I am, all that I do,
all that I'll ever have I offer now
to you.**

The Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord is here.

His Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts

We lift them to the Lord

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

**It is right to give our thanks
and praise**

It is indeed right for you made us,
and before you made us you
made the world we inhabit, and
before the world you made the
eternal home in which, through
Christ we have a place.

All that is spectacular, all that is
plain have their origin in you; all
that is lovely, all who are loving
point to you as their fulfilment.
And grateful as we are for the
world we know and the universe
beyond our ken, we particularly
praise you, whom eternity cannot
contain, for coming to earth and

entering time in Jesus. For his life which informs our living, for his compassion which changes our hearts, for his clear speaking which contradicts our harmless generalities, for his disturbing presence, his innocent suffering, his fearless dying, his rising to life breathing forgiveness, we praise you and worship him. Here too our gratitude rises for the promise of the Holy Spirit, who even yet, even now, confronts us with your claims and attracts us to your goodness. Therefore we gladly join our voices to the song of the Church on earth and in heaven:

**Holy, holy, holy, holy.
Holy, holy, Lord God almighty!
And we lift our hearts before
you as a token of our love:
holy, holy, holy, holy.**

**Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit,
come and fill our hearts anew,
Holy Spirit.
And we lift our voice before
you as a token of our love,
Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit.**

And now, lest we believe that our praise alone fulfils your purpose, we fall silent and remember him who came because words weren't enough. Setting our wisdom, our will, our words aside, emptying our hearts and bringing

nothing in our hands, we yearn for the healing, the holding, the accepting, the forgiving which Christ alone can offer...

Merciful God, send now in kindness, your Holy Spirit to settle on this bread and wine and fill them with the fullness of Jesus. And let that same Spirit rest on us, converting us from the patterns of this passing world, until we conform to the shape of Him whose food we now share. **Amen.**

Among friends, gathered round a table, Jesus took bread and broke it, and said, 'This is my body—broken for you'. Later he took a cup of wine and said 'This is the new relationship with God made possible because of my death. Take it, all of you, to remember me.' He whom the universe could not contain, is present to us in this bread. He who redeemed us and called us by name now meets us in this cup. So take this bread and this wine. In them God comes to us so that we may come to God.

**Holy, holy, holy, holy.
Holy, holy, Lord God almighty!
And we lift our hearts before
you as a token of our love:
holy, holy, holy, holy.**

The Fraction

We break this Bread to share in
the body of Christ

**Though we are many we are
one body because we all share
in one Bread.**

The Agnus Dei

We sing together

**Lamb of God, you take away
the sin of the world, have
mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away
the sin of the world, have
mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away
the sin of the world, grant us
peace.**

This is the Lamb of God who
takes away the sin of the world,
blessed are those who are called
to his supper

**Lord, I am not worthy to re-
ceive you but only say the
word and I shall be healed.**

A Prayer for those joining us on
Youtube who are making their
Spiritual Communion

**My Jesus, I believe that you
are present in the most
Blessed Sacrament. I love You
above `all things and I desire
to receive you into my soul.
Since I cannot now receive
You sacramentally, come at**

**least spiritually into my heart. I
embrace You as if You were
already there, and unite myself
wholly to You. Never permit
me to be separated from You.
Amen.**

Prayer of Humble Access

**We do not presume to come to
this your Table, O merciful
Lord, trusting in our own right-
eousness, but in your manifold
and great mercies. We are not
worthy so much as to gather
up the crumbs under thy Ta-
ble. But you are the same Lord,
whose property is always to
have mercy: Grant us there-
fore, gracious Lord, so to eat
the flesh of your dear Son Je-
sus Christ, and to drink his
blood, that our sinful bodies
may be made clean by his
body, and our souls washed
through his most precious
blood, and that we may ever-
more dwell in him, and he in
us. Amen.**

The Distribution of Communion

The Chalice Bearers are: Peggy
Stone and Nana Twumaampofo

Communion Hymn

The angel Gabriel from heaven
came,
His wings as drifted snow, his
eyes as flame,

All hail, said he, thou lowly
maiden Mary!

Most highly favoured Lady,
Gloria!

For know a blessed mother thou
shalt be,

All generations laud and honour
thee,

Thy son shall be Emmanuel by
seers foretold,

Most highly...

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed
her head,

"To me be as it pleaseth God,"
she said,

"my soul shall laud and magnify
his holy Name."

Most highly...

Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ,
was born

in Bethlehem, all on a Christmas
morn,

and Christian folk throughout the
world will ever say,

Most highly...

Post Communion Collect

Heavenly Father, who chose the
Blessed Virgin Mary to be the
mother of the promised saviour:
fill us your servants with your
grace, that in all things we may
embrace your holy will and with
her rejoice in your salvation;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

The Peace

Christ who has nourished us, is
our peace. Strangers and
friends, male and female, old and
young. He has broken down the
barriers to bind us to him and to
each other. Having tasted His
goodness, let us share his
peace.

The peace of the Lord be always
with you.

And also with you.

The Peace is shared.

**In gratitude, in deep gratitude
for this moment, this meal,
these people, we give our-
selves to you.**

**Take us out to live as changed
people because we have
shared the Living Bread and
cannot remain the same.**

**Ask much of us, expect much
from us, enable much by us
and encourage many by us. So
Lord may we live to your glory,
both as inhabitants of earth
and citizens of the common-
wealth of heaven. Amen.**

Benediction

On our heads and our homes

The blessing of God

In our coming and going
The Peace of God
In our life and believing
The Love of God
Be with us all
Today until the end of time.
Amen.

May God the Holy Spirit, by
whose working the Virgin Mary
conceived the Christ, help you
bear the fruits of holiness. And
the blessing ...**Amen**

Notices

Hymn (Please stand if you are
able)

Tell out, my soul, the greatness
of the Lord!

Unnumbered blessings give my
spirit voice;

Tender to me the promise of His
Word;

In God my Saviour shall my heart
rejoice.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness
of His name!

Make known His might, the
deeds His arm has done;

His mercy sure, from age to age
the same;

His holy Name, the Lord, the
mighty One.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness
of His might!

Powers and dominions lay their
glory by;
Proud hearts and stubborn wills
are put to flight;
The hungry fed, the humble lifted
high.

Tell out, my soul, the glories of
His Word!

Firm is His promise, and His
mercy sure.

Tell out my soul, the greatness of
the Lord

To children's children and forev-
ermore!

The Lord be with you
And also with you.

Let us bless the Lord
Thanks be to God

May the divine assistance remain
with us always.

**And with all our brothers and
sisters in Christ.**

May the souls of the faithful de-
parted through the mercy of God,
rest in peace. **And rise in glory.**
Amen.

We sit to listen to the Organ Vol-
untary

Each Sunday in Advent we will
hear one of the Great 'O' Anti-
phons - traditionally used in the
seven days preceding Christmas

Day during Vespers. The text gives a title of Christ; one of His attributes mentioned in scripture. Advent 4 we hear O Clavis David - O Key of David.

NOTICES

Wednesday Eucharist at

Bowles Lodge ~ 10.00a.m.

Please do join us.

Compline - We celebrate a compline service on zoom each Wednesday at 6.00pm. Please feel free to join us if you can.

The Zoom link is: Meeting ID:
457 244 0784 Passcode:
5i1Uca

NO Compline on Christmas Eve

Advent Giving Tree – The Advent Giving Tree for Sightsavers International is now at the back of the church. Please hang your gift on the tree and it will be replaced with a star. Sightsavers treat eye conditions e.g. **cataracts** and tackle debilitating **diseases**, many of which cause sight loss.

Village Carol Service – is today at 6pm. After the service refreshments will be served.

Christmas Message Tree – the children have made a large tree

for seasonal messages. It is standing in their corner with a supply of labels for your message. You may wish to consider writing your Christmas message on their tree and donating to charity, instead of purchasing Christmas cards.

Easyfundraising

St Laurence Church is registered with easyfundraising, which means you can help us for FREE. Over 8,000 retailers will donate to us when you use easyfundraising to shop with them – at no extra cost to yourself! All you need to do is sign up and remember to use easyfundraising whenever you shop online. It's easy and completely FREE! These donations really mount up, so please sign up to support us at: https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stlaurence-hawkhurst/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=pmc&utm_content=email-1

Collection and Giving - A collection will be taken during this service. Please remember to use a Gift Aid envelope if you are a taxpayer. Also you may support the work of St Laurence Church

by donating at the collection box
or the online terminal at the exit.

CHRISTMAS 2025

Sunday 21st 6pm

Village Carol Service

Christmas Eve Wednesday

24th 4.30pm

Crib Service – children to come
dressed as a Nativity character.
There will be a live donkey at this
service.

Christmas Eve Wednesday

24th 11.30pm

Midnight Mass

Christmas Day Thursday 25th

8am

Holy Communion

Christmas Day Thursday 25th

10am

Family Service with Holy Com-
munion

Authorised Lay Minister

Dr. Julie Hammonds

07587 470678

Churchwardens

Claire Roberts

01580 754374

Liz Hatcher

01580 712099

Assistants

Lydeke Klein

01580 493732

Ali Jones

01580 755705

Safeguarding:

Mrs Jane Cooper

07825 044877

Organists:

Dr. Charlotte O' Neill

01580 753817

Mr. Richard O'Neill

01580 753817

AT YOUR SERVICE

Licensed Parish Reader

Mr. Stephen Ringer

01580 879710